

# RELATION

OF THE  
Fearful Estate

OF

FRANCIS SPIRA,

In the year, 1548.

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Compyled by *Nath. Bacon*, Esq.

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PROV. 14. 14.

*The backslider in heart shall be filled with  
his own wayes.*

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Edinburgh, printed by *Andrew An-*  
*derson*, and are to be sold at his  
Shop, on the North-side of the  
Cross. *Anno Dom. 1675.*

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## *A* P R E F A C E.

**F**or truth of this History ensuing, besides Circumstances of place, person, time, occasion, so exactly observed; I refer my self to the relation of those godly men, who in several Languages have manifested to the world the several passages thereof. And although I am not ignorant, that at the first they were not only not credited, but also discredited and slandered, by such as found them to be a Blur to the Roman Profession; yet they lost not their lustre thereby: but (being acquitted by many Compurgators of several Nations, and some of the Romish Religion, being all of them spectators of this Tragedie) it occasioned not only a further manifestation & confirmation of the truth, but also a large & more frequent confluence to see that which they had formerly only heard of. This partly appeareth out of the succeeding Story, but more fully out of an Apology written by Vergerius, Bishop of Justinople, who was accused for dispersing the fame of his example to the stain of Popery: In which Apology to N. Rotan, Suffragan of Padua, is shortly and plainly declared, what was said, what was done, and who were present. If that it be demanded, what moved me to compile this Treatise? Spira, tell them, that it should teach fear and reverence: and indeed among all those that come to see him, few or none returns unshaken.



Vergerius in his own Epistle saith, I would  
go see him again, but I exceedingly fear an  
crimble: and in his Apology saith, It is such  
rare example, as I would willingly go to the furth-  
est parts of the world to hear or see the like. The  
Lady Jane to her Fathers Chaplain (that  
had fallen into Spira's snare) saith, Remem-  
ber the lamentable estate of Spira. I ac-  
knowledge that there hath been formerly  
a Book published in our Mother tongue, concern-  
ing this subject; but (as far as I can learn, for  
I could never yet obtain any of them) it was  
nothing so large and various as this present  
Treatise: and as I have heard, a rare Relation  
of only one of the Tractates from whence I have  
gathered this present Discourse in part. Concern-  
ing my care and fidelity in this business, it  
such, as I may truly say (without changing  
colour) that there is not one sentence of all the  
Work attributed unto the person of Spira, but  
hath its warrant either from the Epistles of Ve-  
gerius and Gribauldus, Professors of the Law  
at Padua, or from the Discourses of Hen-  
Scrimger a Scottish man, Sigismund Gelon  
Transilvanian, and Marth. Bocha a Divine  
Basil: neither have I taken any other liberty  
than, as a relation, to weave the foresaid Dis-  
courses one within another: so as those which  
under several Writers were before counted  
several, are now (by my endeavours) reduced  
into one intire History connected by due succession  
of time and occasion, as punctually as could  
be aimed at, by the circumstances noted in the Writ-  
tings of those holy and learned men before named.

N. B.

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TO THE  
AUTHOR and READER  
Of This  
HISTORY.

**S**ome scattered parcels of this Story lay  
In forraign Papers; which hadst not found  
away :

Thus to collect, had **{** been obvious pray,  
**}** never seent the day.

Reader, wouldst see how sinning against the light  
Will quench, and leave the soul in a sad night  
Of discontent? Come hither, Reader, then, look  
And learn light-quenching sins to fear, (here

Reader, wouldst see the comfort-breathing Sp'rit  
The grieve, what curstesse grief it doth demerit?  
Come hither then, look here.

Here see a soul that's all despair; A man  
All hell, a spirit all one wound; who can  
a wounded spirit bear?

Reader, Wouldst see (what maist thou never feel)  
Despairs, racks, tortures, whips of burning steel  
Come then, look here,

## To the Author and Reader.

Behold this man, this furnace, in whose hearth  
Sin hath created hells. Oh ! in each part

What flames appear ?

His thoughts all things, words swords, brimstone  
his breath,

His sight flames, wishes curses, life a death :

A thousand deaths live in him, he not dead,

A breathing curse in living scalding leed :

And yet he lives our Monument, to tell

How black are quenched lights ;

Quencht joyes are double frights,

Black dayes are double nights ;

Heaven tasted, lost, a double hell.

I have call'd thee Reader, pray so be.

Read this, that others read not Thee.

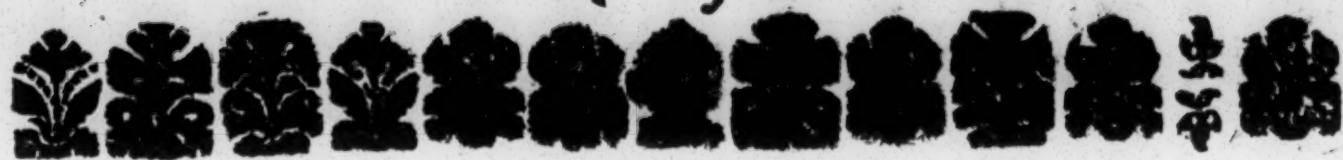
Legas Historiam,  
Nè fias Historia.

M. N.

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Extra





**E**Xtraordinary Examples of divine Justice  
 God never intended for a nine dayes  
 wonder, else would he, when he ex-  
 emplified Lot's Wife, have turned her  
 into a statue of melting snow, not of lasting salt;  
 which stood, as Josephus tells us, till his age,  
 after the destruction of Jerusalem; and as some  
 Travellers report, till at this day, Ut quoddam  
 hominibus præstaret condimentum; quo sapiant  
 unde illud caveatur exemplum, Aug. de civit.  
 Dei, lib. 6, cap. 30, for a season against cor up-  
 tion, a preservative against Apostacy. This  
 Tragedy, when fresh and new was the conver-  
 sion and confirmation of sundry Worthies:  
 Vergerius, a daily spectator thereof, forsaking  
 a rich Bishoprick of Justinopolis, and tents of  
 Antichrist, went to Basil, and died a worthy  
 Protestant: Many Nations had eye witnesses of  
 their own Students, then is the University of  
 Padua, who penned the Story, the Copies  
 whereof are frequently revived; our English  
 ones were very defective, and now worn out  
 of Shops and hands: Sundry Manuscripts of  
 this abroad imperfect; which moved me to com-  
 pare this labour of a worthy Gentleman ( who  
 faithfully translated it out of Italian, French and  
 Dutch Letters ) with the Latine of Coelius  
 Secundus, Curio, Matthæus Gribauldus, Profes-  
 sors of the Civil Law in Padua, Sigismund  
 Gelons, a Transilvanian, Henricus Scotus, all  
 daily Visitors of Spira, and find it accord with  
 them. Touching Spira's person, I find most lear-  
 ned Writers do incline to the right and hope-  
 ful.



( )  
Full hand; moved by his sweet, humble and  
charitable speeches: some few desperate ones  
excepted: that fell from him in some little  
agonies, which kept him fasting and watching  
about six Moneths space, eating nothing but  
what was forced down his throat. The sum  
of Calvin and Borthaus \* their  
counsels, is, that all learn to take \* Who write  
heed of back sliding; which largely of the  
Gods soul abhores, and not to Use of this  
daily with Conscience, and hell Pattern.  
on earth, if justly incensed; more  
to be feared than the Spanish Inquisition, or  
all the Strappadoes and torments in the world  
and to take heed of ~~Soptra~~'s principal Errours  
Which were, to dispute with Sathan ever busie  
in time of weaknesse, especially to reason, and  
conclude from present sense, to GODS present  
Reprobation and future Damnation: But  
which is hard, if possible, for any man to  
determine in his own, much more in others  
cases. So commending thee to His grace, who  
able to establish thee to the end, I bid thee fare  
well, and hope well, while the space of grace  
lasteth, *Dum spiras, spiras* So mayest thou take good  
and no hurt, by the reading of this terrible  
Example.

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A Relation of the fearful Estate of  
*Francis Spira.*

**I**n the year, 548. when the glorious Son of the Gospel was but newly risen in Europe, in the dapes of the reign of Edward the sixth of that name, King of England; in the Territorp, and under the Jurisdiction of the City of Veinca, being the very border of Italy, in the Town of Cittadella, lived one Francis Spira, a civil Lawyer, an Advocate of great rank and esteem, being of known learning and eloquence, of great experience, of carriage circumspect and severe, his speech grave and composed, his countenance sharp and austere, every way befitting that authority wherewith he was advanced; endowed with outward blessings, of wife and eleven Children, and wealth in abundance. What his worst parts were, I have no other warrant than his own words; which (if not tainted over much with the bitterness of a desperate mind, and bearing a countenance rather of passion, than of sober confession) may seem to adde a period to all further commendations.

I was (saith he) excessive covetous of money, & accordingly I applied my self to get by injustice, corrupting justice by decet, inventing tricks to delude justice, good causes either defended deceitfully, or sold them to the adversary perfidiously; ill causes I maintained with all my might: I wittingly opposed the known truth, and the trust committed unto me, I either betrayed or perverted.

Thus



Thus having worn out forty four years or thereabouts, and the news of the new, or rather newly reborn, opinions of Luther coming into those parts, represented an object of novelty unto him: who being as desirous to know, as he was famous for knowledge, suffered not these wandring opinions to passe unexamined: But searching into the Scriptures, and into all books of controverſie that he could get, both old and new, and finding more then ſame or opinion, he began to take their nature ſo well, as he entertained, loves and abhors them at length, and with ſuch zeal, as he became a Profeſſor; yea a teacher of them, firſt to his Wife, Children, and Family, and after to his friends & familiar acquaintance, and in compariſon, ſeemed to neglect all other affairs; intending ever to preſſe this main point, that [We muſt wholly and only depend on the free and unchangeable love of God in the death of Chriſt, as the only ſure way to ſalvation] And this was the ſumme of all his diſcourſe, and this continued for the ſpace of ſix year, or thereabouts, even ſo long as this fire could keep it ſelf within private walls, but at length it brake forth into publick meetings, ſo as the whole Province of Padua ſhaken by the luſtre thereof. The Clergy finding the trade of their pardons to decay, and their Purgatory to wax cold, began to beſtir themſelves, glaſſing their actions, firſt, with calumnious aſperſions upon the whole Profeſſion: then more plainly ſtriking at Spira with grievous accuſations: and to effect their purpose, ſome promiſe labour, others ſadour, ſome advice, others maintenance; all joynt to divide either his ſoul from his body, or both from God.

Now was John Caſa the Popes Legate reſident



ident at Venice, being by birth a Florentine, and one that wanted neither malice against those of this way, nor craftinesse to effect his malicious purposes. To him these men repair with outcries against Spira, that he was the man that condemned the received rights of the Church, beluded the Ecclesiasticall power, and scandalized the pollicie thereof; one of no mean rank, being a man of account and authority, and thereunto learned in the Scriptures, elegant in speech, and in one word, a dangerous Lutheran; having also many Disciples, and therefore not to be displeased.

At this began the Legate to cast his eye on the terrible alteration that lately had hapned in Germany, where, by the means of one only Luther, the Romish Religion had suffered such a blow, as that it could neither be cured by dissimulation, nor defended by power; but the Clergie must either mend their manners, or lose their dignities: On the other side when he saw how propense the common people inhabiting in the bordering Countie of Italy, were to entertain those new opinions, he now thought it no time to dispute or perswade, but with speed repairs to the Senate, and procures authority from them to send to Spira.

Spira by this time had considered with himself of the nature of his courage, how evident and notozious it was, and therefore, subject to be envied by such as neither liked his Person nor Religion: He perceived that his opinions were neither retired, nor speculative, but such as aimed at the overthrow of the Romish faction, and a change of pollicie; and that his enemies wanted neither power nor occasion to call him to an account



count in publick; when he must either Apostatize, and shamefully giue his former life; yea, his own conscience the lie, or endure the utmost malice of his deadly enemies; or forsake his Wife, Children, Friends, Goods, Authority; yea his dear Countrey, and betake himself to a forraign people there to endure a thousand miseries, that do continually wait upon a voluntary exile. Being thus distracted, and tossed in the restless waves of doubt, without guide to trust to, or habite to flee to for succour; on the sabbath God's Spirit assisting, he felt a calm and began to discourse with himself in this manner:

Why wanderest thou thus in uncertainties, unhappy man? Cast away fear, put on thy shield, the shield of faith: where is thy wonted courage, thy goodnesse, thy constancy? Remember that Christs glory lies at the stake: suffer thou without fear, and He will defend thee; He will tell thee what thou shalt answer, He can beat down all danger, bring thee out of prison, raise thee from the dead. Consider Peter in a dungeon, the Martyrs in the fire; if thou makest a good confession, thou mayest indeed go to prison or death, but an eternal reward in the heaven remains for thee. What hast thou in this world comparable to eternal life, to everlasting happiness? If thou doest otherwayes, think of the scandal, (common people live by example, thinking what ever is done, is well done) fear the losse of peace and joy, fear hell, death, and eternal wrath; Or if thy flesh be so strong as to cause thee to doubt of the issue, flee thy Countrey, get thee away, though never so far, rather then deny the Lord of Life.

Now was Spira in reasonable quiet, being resolved



solued to yeeld to these weighty reasons, yet  
holding it wisdom to examine all things, he con-  
sults also with flesh and blood: Thus the battell  
both renew, and the flesh begins in this manner:

Be well advised, fond man, consider reason on  
both sides, and then judge: How canst thou  
thus ever ween thine own sufficiency, as thou  
neither regardst the examples of thy Progeni-  
tors, nor the judgement of the whole Church?  
Dost thou not consider what misery this thy  
rashnesse will bring thee into? Thou shalt lose  
thy substance, gotten with so much care and  
travell; thou shalt undergo the most exquisite  
torments that malice it self can devise; thou  
shalt be counted an Heretick to all: and to  
close up all, thou shalt die shamefully? What  
thinkest thou of the loathsome stinking  
dungeon, the bloody axe, the burning fagot, are  
they delightful? be wise at length, keep thy  
life and honour; thou mayest live to do much  
good to good men, as God commands thee;  
thou mayest be an ornament to thy Country: &  
put the case thy Countries losse would be of  
small esteem with thee, wilt thou bring thy  
friends also into danger? Thou hast begotten  
Children, wilt thou now cut their throats, and  
inhumanely butcher them, which may in time  
bring honour to their Country, glory to God,  
help and furtherance to his Church? Go to the  
Legate, weak man, freely confesse thy fault, and  
help all these miseries.

Thus did the cares of this world, and the deceit-  
fulness of riches, choke the good seed that was  
formerly sown: So as fearing he faints, and  
yeelds unto the allurements of this present world;  
and being thus blinded, he goes to the Legate at  
Venice



Venice, and salutes him with this news:

Having for these diverse years entertained an opinion concerning some Articles of Faith, contrary to the Orthodox and received Judgement of the Church; and uttered many things against the authority of the Church of Rome, and the Universal Bishop; I humbly acknowledge my fault and errour, and my folly in misleading others: I therefore yeeld my self in all obedience, to the Supream Bishop, into the Bosome of the Church of Rome; never to depart again from the Traditions and Decrees of the holy See. I am heartily sorry for what is past, and humbly beg pardon for so great an offence.

The Legat perceiving Spira to faint, he pursues him to the utmost; he causeth a recitation of all the errors to be drawn in writing, together with his confession annexed to it, and commands Spira to subscribe his name there, which accordingly he did: then the Legat commands him to return to his own Town, and there to declare this confession of his, and to acknowledge the whole Doctrine of the Church of Rome to be holy and true, and to abjure the opinions of Luther, and other such Teachers as false and heretical. [ Man knows the beginnings of sin, but who bounds the issue thereof? ] Spira having once lost footing, goes down again, he cannot stay nor gain-say the Legat; but promiseth to accomplish his whole will and pleasure: He soon addresses himself for his journey: and being onward in the way, he thinks himself of the large spoils he had brought away from the Conflict with the Legat; what glorious testimonie he had given of his great faith, and constancy in Christ's Cause: And to be plain, how impiously he had  
denied



denyed Christ, and his Gospel at Venice, and  
what he promised to do further in his own Coun-  
try : And thus partly with fear, and partly with  
shame, being confounded, he thought he heard a  
voice speaking unto him, in this manner,

Spira, What dost thou here? whither goest  
thou? hast thou, unhappy man, given thy hand  
writting to the Legate at Venice? yet see thou  
do not sell it in thy own Country? Dost thou  
indeed think eternal life so mean, as that thou  
preferrest this present life before it? Dost thou  
well in preferring Wife and Children before  
Christ? Is the windy applause of the people  
better indeed, than the glory of God, and the  
possession of this Worlds good more dear to thee  
than the salvation of thine own soul? Is the  
small use of a moment of time more desirable  
than eternal wrath is dreadful? Think with  
thy self what Christ endured for thy sake; is it  
not equall thou shouldest suffer somewhat for  
him? Remember, man, that the sufferings of  
this present life are not comparable to the glory  
that shall be revealed. If thou sufferest with him,  
thou shalt also reign with him : Thou canst not  
answer for what thou hast already done; never-  
thelesse, the gate of mercy is not quite shut,  
take heed that, thou heapest not sin upon sin, lest  
thou repent when it will be too late.

Now was Spira in a wilderness of doubt, not  
knowing which way to turn him, nor what to do,  
yet being arriv'd in his own Country, and a-  
mongst his friends, (with shame enough) he re-  
lateth what he had done, and what he had fur-  
ther promised to do, and how the terror of God on  
the one side, and the terror of this world on the  
other side, did continually rack him; and there-  
fore



foze he desired of them advice in this so doubtful a case: his Friends upon small deliberation answered, That it was requisite he should take heed that he did not in any wise betray his Wife and Children, and all his friends into danger, seeing, that by so small a matter as the reciting of a little Schedule, which might be done in little space then half an hour, he might both free himself from present danger, and preserve many that depend upon him; adding moreover, that he could get no credit in relenting from that which he had already in greatest part performed before the Legat at Venice; and in the perfect accomplishing thereof, little or no discredit could arise more then what by the former action he had already sustained: On the other side, if he did not perform his promise made to the Legat, he could neither discharge himself of the shame which he had already incurred, nor avoid far more heavy and insupportable injuries, then probably he should have incurred, if he had persisted obstinately in his former opinions.

This was the last blow of the battel: and Spira utterly overcome, goes to the Prætor, and offers to perform his promise made to the Legat, who in the mean time had taken order to have all things ready, and had sent the instrument of affirmation, signed by Spira, to the Prætor, by the hands of a certain Priest. All that night the miserable man wore out with restless cares, without any minute of rest; the next morning being come he gets up, and being ready, he with Spira enters into the publick Congregation, where Masse being finished, in the presence of his friends and enemies, and of the whole Assembly (being by estimation near two thousand people) he



pea, and of heaven it self, he recites that infamous abjuration, word for word, as it was written: It being done, he was fined at thirty pieces of Gold, which he presently payed, five whereof were given to the Priest that brought the abjuration, the other twenty five were imploied towards the making of a Shrine to put the Eucharist in; then was he sent home, restored to his Dignities, Goods, Wife and Children: No sooner was he departed, but he thought he heard a drefull voice saying unto him, Thou wicked wretch, thou hast denied me, thou hast renounced the Covenant of thy obedience, thou hast broken thy vow; hence Apostate, bear with thee the sentence of thy eternal damnation. He trembling and quaking in body and mind, fell down in a swoon: relief was at hand for the body, but from that time forward he never found any peace or ease of mind; but continuing in unceasing torments, he professed y he was captived under the rebenging hand of the great God: that he heard continually that fearful sentence of Christ, that just Judge, that he knew he was utterly undone, that he could neither hope for grace, nor Christs intercession with God the Father in his behalf. Thus was his fault ever heaby on his heart, and ever his judgment before his eyes.

Now began his friends, some of them, to repent too late of their rash counsel: others not looking so high as the judgement of God, laid all the blame upon his melancholick constitution; that overshadowing his judgement, wrought in him a kind of madness. Every one censured as his fancie led him: yet, for remedy, all agreed in this, to use both the wholesome help of Physicians;



and the pious advice of Divines; and therefore thought it meet to convey him to Padua, an university of note, where plenty of all manner of medicines was to be had. This they accordingly did with his wife, Children and whole Family: others also of his friends accompanying him: being arrived at the house of James Ardin, Saint Leonards Parish, they sent for three Physicians of most note who upon due observation of the effects, and of other Symptoms of his disease, and some private conference one with another amongst themselves, returned their verdict in this manner, viz. That they could not discern that his body was afflicted with any danger of Temper originally from it self, by reason of over-ruling of any humour, but that this Malady of his did arise from some grief, or passion of mind, which being over-burdened, did so oppress the spirits, as they, wanting free passage, stirred up many ill humours, whereof the body of man is full, and these ascending up into the brain, troubled the fancy, shadowed the seat of the Judgement, and so corrupted it: this was the state of his disease; and that outward part that was visible to the eye of nature, this they endeavored reform by purgation, either to consume, or at least to divert the course of these humours from the brain, but all their skill effected nothing; which Spira noting, said: Alace, poor men, how far wide are you? Do you think that this Disease is to be cured by potions? Believe me there must be another manner of medicine, it is neither Plaster nor Drugs that can help a fainting soul, come down with sense of sin, and the wrath of God: it's only Christ that must be the Physician, and the Gospel the sole Antidote.



The Physicians easily believed him after they had understood the whole truth of the matter, and therefore they wished him to seek some spirituall comfort. By this time the fame of this man was spread over all Padua, and the neighbour Countie; partly, for that he was a man of esteem; partly, because, as the disease, so the occasion, was speciall-ly remarkable: for this was not done in a corner, nor so as daily there came multitudes of all sorts to see him; some out of curiosity, only to see and discourse; some out of a pious desire, to try all means that might reduce him to comfort again; then, at least, to benefite themselves by such a spectacle of misery, and of the justice of God. Amongst these Paulus Vergerius, Bishop of Justinopolis, and Mathæus Gribaudus, deserve especial-ly to be named as the most principal labourers for this mans comfort. They find him now about fifty years of age neither affected with the dotage of old age, nor with the unconstant, head-strong passion of youth; but in the strength of his experience and judgment: in a burning heat, calling incessantly for drink; yet his understanding active, quick of apprehension, witty in discourse, above his ordinary manner, and sublimely opposite: His friends laboured him, by all fair means, to receive some nourishment, which he obstinately gain-saying, they forcibly infused some liquid sustenance into his mouth; most of which he spit out again, exceedingly chaffing, and in this fretting mood of his, said, As it is true [that all things worke for the best to those that love God,] so to the wicked all are contrary; for, whereas a plentiful offspring is the blessing of God, and his reward, being a stay to the weak estate of their aged parents, to me they are a



cause of bitternesse and vexation : they do strive to make me tire out this misery ; I would faine be at an end ; I deserve not this dealing at their hands. Oh ! that I were gone from hence, that some body would let out this weary soul.

His friends saluted him and asked him, what he conceived to be the cause of his disease? From thence forth he brake out into a lamentable Discourse of the vassages formerly related, and that with such passionate Execution, that he caused many to weep, and most to tremble. They contrarily, comfort him, propounded many of Gods promises recorded in the Scripture, and many examples of Gods mercy : My sin (said he) is greater than the mercy of God. Nay, answered they, the mercy of God is above all sin : God would have all men to be saved. It's true (quoth he) he would have all that he hath elected to be saved ; he would not have damned Reprobates to be saved ; I am one of that number, I know it, for I willingly and against my knowledge denied Christ ; and I feel that he hardens, and will not suffer me to hope.

After some silence, one asked him, whether he did not believe that Doctrine (to be true (which he was accused before the Legate : He answered ; I did believe it when I denied it, but now I neither believe that, nor the Doctrine of the Roman Church : I believe nothing, I have no faith, no trust, no hope ; I am a Reprobate like Cain or Judas, who casting away all hope of mercy, fell into despair ; and my friends do me great wrong that they suffer me not to go to the place of unbelievers, as I justly deserve.

Where they began sharply to rebuke him, requiring, and charging him, that in any wise he should



not violate the mercy of God. To which he answered; The mercy of God is exceeding large, and extends to all the elect; but not to me or any like to me, who are sealed up to wrath: I tell you I deserve it, my own conscience condemns me, what needeth any other Judge? Christ came (said they) to take away sin; and calling for a book they read unto him the passion of Christ; and coming to his nailing to the Cross, Spira said, This indeed is comfortable to such as are elected; but as for me wretch, they are nothing but grief and torment, because I condemned them. Thus roaring for grief, and tossing himself up and down upon the bed as he lay, he intreated them to read no more. As Gribauldus was coming to see him, Vergerius said to Spira. Dear Sir, beare us Doctor Gribauldus, a godly and faithful friend of yours, come to see you. He is welcome (said he) but he shall find me ill. Gribauldus replied, Sir, this is but an illusion of the Devil who doth what he can to vex you; but turn you to God with your whole heart, and he is ready to shew you mercy; the Lord, you know, is full of mercy, it is he that hath said, that [as often as a sinner repents of his sin, he will remember his sins no more.] Consider this in the example of Peter, that was Christs familiar, and an Apostle, and yet denied him thrice with an oath, and yet God was merciful unto him: Consider also the Thief that spent his whole life in wickednesse, and for all that did not God graciously respect him in the last minute of his his life: Is the Lords hand now shortned that it cannot save? To this Spira answered: If Peter grieved and repented, it was because Christ beheld him with a merciful eye, and in that he was pardoned: it was



was not because he wept, but because God was gracious to him; but God respects not me, and therefore I am a Reprobate: I feel no comfort can enter into my heart, there's place there but only for torments and vexings of spirit: I tell you, my case is properly mine own, no man was ever in the like plight, and therefore my estate is fearful.

Then roaring out in the bitterness of his spirit, said, Its a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The violence of his passion and action sutable, did amaze many of the beholders; insomuch as some of them said with a whispering voice, that he was possessed. He overhearing it, said. Do ye doubt it? I have a whole Legion of devils that take up their dwelling within me, and possess me as their own; and justly too, for I have denied Christ.

Whether did you that willingly or not? (said they.) That's nothing to the purpose (said Spira) Christ saith, [Whosoever denies me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven] Christ will not be denyed, no not in a word; and therefore it is enough, though in heart I never denyed him.

They observing his distemper to arise from the sense and horror of the pains of hell, asked him, Whether he thought there were worse pains then what he endured for the present; he said, That he knew there were far worse pains then those that he then suffered; for the wicked shall rise to their judgment, but they shall not stand in Judgment. This I tremble to think of; yet do I desire nothing more, than that I might come to that place, where I may be sure to feel the worst, and to be freed from fear of worse to come.

But



But you are to consider (said one) that those Opinions, for which you were accused before the Legate, were impious; and therefore you are not to think you denied Christ, but rather that you did confesse him, acknowledging the infallible truth of the Catholick Church.

Truly (said he) when I did deny those opinions, I did think them to be true, and yet I did deny them.

Goto (said others) now then believe that they are true.

Now I cannot, (said he) God will not suffer me to believe them, nor trust in his mercy. What would you have me do? I would fain attain to this power but cannot, though I should presently be burnt for it.

But why do you (said the other) esteem this so grievous a sin, when as the learned Legate constrained you to it: which he surely would not have done, if your former opinions had not been erroneous: no, good Francis, the Devil belets thee, let not therefore the grievousnesse of thy sin (if any such be) amaze thee.

You say right (replied he) the Devil hath posselt me, and God hath left me to his power; for I find I can neither believe the Gospel, nor trust in God's mercy. I have sinned against the holy Ghost; and God by his immutable decree, hath bound me over to perpetual punishment, without any hope of pardon. It's true, that the greatnesse of my sin, or the multitude of them, cannot bind Gods mercy: all those many sins that in the former part of my life I have committed, then did not so much trouble me; for I trusted that God would not lay them to my charge: but now, having sinned against the holy Ghost,



**G**host, God hath taken away from me all power of repentance and now brings all my sins to remembrance, and thus guilty of one, guilty of all. And therefore, it is no matter whether my sins be great or small, few or many; they be such as Christs blood, nor Gods mercy belongs not to me: [ God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardneth. Rom. 9. 18. ] This is it that gnaws my heart, he hath hardned me, and I find that he dayly more and more doth harden me, and therefore I am out of hope: I feel it, and therefore cannot but despair. I tell you, there was never such a monster as I am, never was any man alive a spectacle of exceeding misery. I knew that justification is to be expected by Christ; and I denied and abjured it, to the end I might keep this frail life from adversity. and my children from poverty; and now behold how bitter this life is to me, and God only knows what shall become of this my family: but surely no good is likely to betide it, but rather daily worse and worse; and such a ruine at length, as one stone shall not be left upon another.

**B**ut why should you (said Gribauldus) conceit so deeply of your sin. seeing you cannot but know, that many have denied Christ, yet never fell into despair? Well (said he) I can see no ground of comfort for such, neither can I warrant them from Gods revenging hand in wrath, though it pleaseth God yet to suffer such to be in peace: and besides, there will a time of change come, and then they shall be thoroughly tryed and if it were not so, yet God is just in making me an example to others; and I cannot justly complain. There is no punishment so great, but



have deserved it, for this so heinous offence: I assure you it is no smal matter to deny Christ, & yet it is more ordinary then commonly men do conceive of. It is not a denial made before a Magistrate as it is with me: for as often as a Christian doth dissemble the known truth, as often he approves of false worship, by presenting himself at it: so often as he hath not things worthy of his calling, or such things as are unworthy of his calling, so often he denies Christ; thus did I, and therefore am justly punished for it. Your estate, quoth Gribauldus, is not so strange as you make it. Job was so far gone, that he complained, God had set him as a mark against him: and David that was a man after Gods own heart, complained often, that God had forsaken him, and was become his enemy; yet both received comfort again. Comfort your self therefore, God will come at length, though he now seem far off.

Brother (answered Spira) I believe all this, the Devils believe and tremble; but David was ever elected and dearly beloved of God, and though he fell, yet God took not utterly away his holy Spirit; and therefore was heard when he prayed, [Lord take not thy holy Spirit from me;] but I am in another case, being ever accursed from the presence of God; neither can I pray as he did, because his holy Spirit is quite gone, and cannot be recalled. and therefore I know I shal live in continual hardnesse so long as I live. Oh that I might feel but the least sense of the love of God to me, though but for one smal moment, as I now feel his heavy wrath that burns him like the torments of hell within me, and afflicts my conscience with pangs unutterable: Verily desperation is hell it self.

Here Gribauldus said, I do verily believe, Spira, that God having so severely chastised you in this life, correcteth you in mercy here, that he may spare you hereafter, and that he hath mercy sealed up for you in time to come.

May (said Spira) hence do I know that I am a Reprobate, because he afflicteth me with hardnesse of heart. That my body had suffered all my life long, so that he would be pleased to release my soul, and ease my conscience, this burdened conscience.

Gribauldus being desirous to ease his mind from the continual meditation of his sins, as also to sound how for the present he stood affected to the Romish Church; asked him, What he thought became of the souls of men, so soon as they departed out of the body? To which he answered:

Although this be not so fully revealed in Scripture, yet



I verily believe that the souls of the Elect go presently to the Kingdom of glory, and not that they sleep with the body, as some do imagine.

Very well, (said one of the Spectators) why do the Scriptures then say, that God brings down to hell and raiseth up? I Samuel 8. seeing it cannot be meant of the estate of the soul after death, which as thou sayest, either goeth to heaven without change, or to hell without redemption: It must be understood of the estate of the soul in this life: like that wherein thou art at this present: & sometimes we see that God suffers men to fall into the jaws of despair, and yet raiseth them up again; and therefore despair not, but hope: It shall be even thus with thee in his good time.

This is the work (quoth Spira) this is the labor, for I tell you, when I at Venice did first abiure my profession, and so as it were drew an Indenture, the Spirit of God often admonished me; and when at Citadella I did again were set to my seal, the Spirit of God often suggested me, do not write, Spira, do not seal, yet I resisted the Holy Ghost and did both: and at that very present I did suddenly feel a wound inflicted in my very will: so, altho I can say, I would believe, yet can I not say, I will believe, God hath denied me the power of will, and it falls me in this my miserable estate, as with one that fast in irons, and his friends coming to see him, do pester his estate, and do perswade him to shake off his fetters, to come out of his bonds, which God knows he would fain do, but cannot; this is my very case, you perswade me to believe, how fain would I do it but cannot: now I cannot. Then violently grasping his hands together and raising himself up, Behold (said he) I am strong, yet little and little I decay and consume: and my servants would fain preserve this weary life, but at length the will of God must be done, and I shall perish miserably, and deserve. Rejoice ye righteous in the Lord, blessed are whose hearts the Lord hath mollified.

Then after some pause, Its wonderful, I earnestly desire to pray to God with my heart, yet I cannot; I know my damnation, and I know my remedy is only in Christ, yet I cannot set my self to lay hold on it; such are the punishments of the damned, they confesse what I confess, they repent of their losse of Heaven, they cannot mend their wayes.

As he was thus speaking, he observed divers flies that came about him, and some lighted on him: Behold, (said he) also Belzebub come to his banquet, you shall shortly see the end, and in me, an example, to many, of the Justice and Judgement of God.



About this time came in two Bishops, with diverse Schollars of the University, one of them being Paulus Aegerius, having observed Spira more then any other, being continually conversant with him, told him, his estate was such as rather stood in need of prayer then advice; and therefore desired him to pray with him in the Lords prayer: Spira consented, and he began:

(Our Father which art in heaven) then breaking forth into tears he stopped; but they said, it is well, your grief is a good sign. I bewail, said he, my misery, for I perceive I am forsaken of God, and call to him from my heart as I was wont to do: Yet let us go on, said Aegerius.

(Thy Kingdom come) O Lord, said Spira, bring me also into this kingdom; I beseech thee, shut me not out. Then coming to these words (Give us this day our daily bread) he added O Lord I have enough and abundance to feed this carcasse of mine; but there is another bread I humbly beg, the bread of thy grace, without which I know I am but a dead man.

(Lead us not into temptation) Seeing, Lord, that I am brought into temptation, help me, Lord, that I may escape, the enemy hath overcome, help me, I beseech thee, to overcome this cruel Tyrant.

These things he spake with a mournful voice, the tears trickling down abundantly, and expressing such affection and passion, as turned the bowels of those there present with grief and compunction. They then turning to Spira, said, You know that none can call Christ Jesus the Lord, but by the holy Ghost: you must therefore think of your self, according to that lost affection which you expresse in your prayers, inferring thereby that God hath not wholly cast you off, or bereaved you of his Spirit utterly.

I perceive (said Spira) that I call on him to my eternal damnation; for I tell you again, it is a new and unheard of example that you find in me. If Judas (said they) had not out-lived his dayes, which by nature he might have done might have repented, and Christ would have received him to mercy and yet he sined most grievously against his Master who did so esteem of him, as to honor him with the dignity of an Apostle and did maintain and feed him. He answered, Christ did all feed and honor me: neither yet is my fault one jot lesse than that of his: because it is no more honor to be personally present with Christ, in the flesh, then to be in his presence now by illumination of his holy Spirit: And besides, I deny that ever Judas could have repented, how long soever he had lived, for grace was quite taken from him, as it is now from me.



○ Spira, said they, you know you are in a spiritual desertie you must not therefore believe what Satan suggests: he was ever Liar from the beginning, and a meer Imposter, and will cast thousand lying fancies into your mind, to beguile you withal, you must rather believe those whom you judge to be in a good estate and more able to discern of you than your self: believe us, as we tell you, that God will be merciful unto you.

Oh here is the knot (said Spira) I would I could believe but I cannot.

Then he began to reckon up what fearful dreams and visions he was troubled with continually: that he saw the Devils come flocking into the chamber, and about his bed, terrifying him with strange noises, that these were not fancies, but that he saw them as really as the standers by. And that, beside these outward terrors, he felt continually a racking torture of his mind, and a continual butchery of his conscience, being the very proper pangs of the Damned wights in hell.

Cast away these fancies (said Gribaudus) these are but illusions: humble your self in the presence of God, and praise him. The dead praise not the Lord (answered he) nor they that go down into the pit: we that are drowned in despair are dead, and already gone down into the pit. What hell can there be worse then desperation, or what greater punishment? The gnawing worm, unquenchable fire, horror, confusion and (which is worse then all) desperation it self continually tortures me; and now I count my present estate worse, than if my soul, separated from my body, were with Judas and the rest of the Damned, and theretore now desire rather to be there, than thus to live in the body.

One being present, repeated certain words out of the Psalms: If thy children forsake my Law, and walk not in my judgements, I will visite their transgressions with rods, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless my loving kindnesse will I not utterly take from them, nor suffer my faithfullnesse to fail. Mark this, O Spira, O Covenant I will not break.

These promises (said Spira) belong only to the Elect which if tempted, may fall into sin, but are again lifted up and recovered out: As the Prophet saith, (Though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord will holdeth him:) Therefore Peter could rise, for he was elected, but when the reprobate fall, they cannot rise again as appears in Cain, Saul and Judas: God deals one way with the elect, and another with reprobates.



The next day he prayed with them in the Latine tongue and that with excellent affection, as outwardly appeared. Blessed be God, said Vergerius, these are no signs of eternal reprobation; you must not, O Spira, seek out the secret counsels of Gods election and reprobation: for no man can know, so long as he lives, whether by his good or bad deeds, he be worthy of Gods love or anger: Do you not know that the Prophet David complained, that God had cast off his soul?

I know all this, quoth Spira, I know the mercies of God are infinite, and do surpasse the sins of the whole world, and that they are effectual to all that believe, but this faith, and this hope is the gift of God: O that he would give it me! But it is as impossible as to drink up the Sea at a draught. As for that of Solomon, if he had ever tried that which I feel by woful experience, he would never have spoken as he did: But the truth is, never had mortal man such an evident experience of Gods anger and hatred against him, as I have. You that are in a good estate, think repentance and faith to be works of great facility, and therefore you think it an easie matter to perswade a man to believe. The whole need not the Physician, and he that is well can soon give counsel to such as are ill: But this is the hell to me, my heart is hardened, I cannot believe: (Many are called, but few are chosen.)

Upon what ground, said they, do you conceive so ill an opinion of your self.

I once did know God to be my Father, not only by creation, but by regeneration, I knew him by his beloved Son the Author and Finisher of our salvation; I could pray to him, and hope for pardon of sins from him: I had a taste of his sweetnesse, peace and comfort, now contrariely I know God, not as a Father, but as an enemy. What more? my heart hates God, and seeks to get above him, I have nothing else to fly to but terror and despair.

Belike you think then, said they, that those who have the earnest and first fruits of Gods Spirit, may notwithstanding fall away.

The iudgements of God a deep abyss, said he, we are soon drown'd if we enter into them, (he that thinks he standeth; let him take heed lest he fall.) As for my self I know I am fallen back, and that I once did know the truth, though it may not be so thoroughly: I know not what to say, but that I am one of that number which God hath threatned to tear in pieces.



Say not so, answered they, for God may come though the last hour; keep hold therefore, at the least by hope.

This said he, is my case, I tell you I cannot, God hath deprived me of hope; this brings terror to my mind, and pines the body, which now is so weak as it cannot perform the several offices thereof: for as the Elect have the Spirit testifying that they are the sons of God, so the reprobates, even while they live, often feel a worm in their consciences, whereby they are condemned already. And therefore, as I perceived this wound inflicted on my mind and will, I know that I wanted the gifts of saving grace and that I was utterly undone. God chasteneth his Children with temporary afflictions, that they may come as gold out of the fire and purgeth the wicked with blindness in their understanding and hardness of heart; and woe be to such from whom God taketh his Holy Spirit.

Here one rebuked him, and told him, he gave too much credit to sense, that he was not to believe himself, but rather him that was in a good estate; and I testifie to you said he, that God will be merciful to you.

Nay, said he, for because I am in this ill estate, therefore I can believe nothing but what is contrary to my salvation and comfort: but you that are so confident of your good estate, look that it be true; for it is no small matter to be assured of sincerity. A man had need be exceeding strongly grounded in the truth, before he can be able to affirm such a matter as you now do. It is not the performance of a few outward duties, but a mighty constant labor, with all intention of heart and affection, with full desire and endeavour, continually to set forth Gods glory: There must be neither fear of Legators, Inquisitors, Prisons, nor any death whatsoever. Many think themselves happy that are not: [It is not every one that saith; Lord, Lord, that shal go to heaven.]

They came another day, and found him with his eyes shut, as if he had been drowsie and very loath to discourse, at which time there came in also a grave man from Citadella, who demanded of Spira, if he knew him or not. He lifting up his eye-lids, and not suddenly remembering him the man said to him, I am Prysbyter Anthony Fontamia, I was with you at Venice some eight weeks since. O cursed day, said Spira, O cursed day! Oh that I had never gone thither, Would God I had then died.

Afterwards came in a Priest, called Bernardinus Sardonius, bringing with him a book of Exorcisms to conjure this Devil, whom when Spira saw, shaking his head, he said, I am verily perswaded indeed, that God hath left me to the power of the devil; but such they are, as are not to be found in your Letany, neither will they be cast out by spells. The Priest proceeded.



proceeding in his intended purpose, with a strange uncouth gesture, and a loud voice, adjured the spirit to come into Spira's tongue, and to answer: Spira deriding his fruitlesse labor, with a sigh, turned from him. A Bishop being there present, said to Spira, Brother, God hath put vertue into the Word and Sacraments; and we have used the one means, and find not that effect which we desire, that we try the efficacy of the sacrament: Surely, if you take it as a true Christian ought to receive the body and blood of Christ, it will prove a sovereign medicine for your sick soul.

This I cannot do (answered he) for they that have no right to the promises, have no right to the seals. The Eucharist was appointed only for believers, if we have no faith, we eat and drink judgement to our selves. I received it about a month since: but I did not well in so doing; for I took it by constraint, and so I took it to my deeper condemnation.

Here Vergerius began to importune him earnestly, to beware that he did not wilfully resist grace, and put himself out of heaven, changing him vehemently, by all the Love that was betwixt them, by the love he bare to his children, yea to his own soul; that he would set himself seriously to return to that faith and hope that once he had in the death of Christ, with many such like words. Spira having heard much of the like matter formerly, and being somewhat moved, said, You do but repent, Vergerius what should I hope? why should I believe? God hath taken faith from me, shew me then whither I shal go, shew me a Haven whereto I shal retire. You tell me of Gods mercy, when as God hath cast me off: You tell me of Christs intercession, I have denied him, you command me to believe, I say I cannot, you bring me no comfort; your command is as impossible for me to obey as to keep the Moral Law. If you should perswade one to love God with all his heart, soul and strength, and God gives him not power, can he perform your desire? Do not the Church teach us to sing, [Direct us, O Lord, to love thy Commandments? Hypocrites say that they love God with all their heart, but they lie: for my part, I will not lie, but tell you plainly, such is my case, that though you should never so much importune me to hope or believe, though I desire it, yet I cannot, for God, as a punishment of my wickedness, hath taken away from me all his saving graces, faith, hope and all: I am not the man therefore that you take me for. Belike you thinke I delight in this estate: if I could conceive but the least spark of hope of a better estate hereafter, I would not refuse to endure the most heavy weight of the wrath of that great God, yea, for twenty thousand years. so  
that



that I might at length attain to the end of that misery, which now know will be eternal. But I tell you, my will is wounded, who longs more to believe than I do? but all the ground work hope is gone, for, if the testimonies of holy Scripture be true (as certainly they are) is not this then true, [Whosoever deny me before men, him, saith Christ, will I deny before my Father which is in heaven.] Is not this justly my case as if it had been intended against this very person of mine? And I pray you, what shall become of such a Christ denier, seeing [there is no other Name under heaven whereby you look to be saved?] What saith St. Paul to the Hebrews? [it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of heavenly gift, and are partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they fall away, to be renewed to repentance.] What can be more plain against me? Is not the Scripture also, [if we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a looking for of judgement?] The Scripture speaks of me, St. Paul mentions me, Peter tells me, [It had been better I had never known the way of righteousness, than after I have known, to turn from the holy Commandments: it had been better I had not known, and yet then my condemnation had been most certain.] Do you not see evidently, that I have wilfully denied the known truth. I may justly expect not only damnation, but worse, if worse may be imagined. God will have me undergo the just punishment of my sin, and make me an example of his wrath for your sakes.

The company present admired his discourse, so grievously accusing himself of his fore-past life, so gravely and wisely dilating concerning the judgements of God, that they then were convinced that it was no frenzy or madness that had possessed him, and being, as it were, in admiration of his estate, Spira proceeded again in this manner.

Take heed to your selves, it is no light or easie matter to be a Christian: it is no Baptism or reading of the Scriptures, or boasting of Faith in Christ, (though even these are good) that can prove one to be an absolute Christian. You know what I said before, there must be a conformity in life: a Christian must be strong, unconquerable, not carrying an obscure profession, but resolute, expressing the image of Christ, and holding out against all opposition to the last breath: he must (give all diligence,) by righteousness and holiness, (to make his calling and election sure.) Many there are that snatch at the promises in the Gospel, as if they undoubtedly did belong to them, and yet they remain sluggish and careless, and being flattered by the things of this present world they pass on their course in quietness and security, as if they were the only happy men: whom nevertheless the Lord in his providence



dence hath ordained to eternal wrath, as you may see in St. Lukes rich man. Thus it was with me, therefore take ye heed.

Then came one of his Nephews, and offered him some sustenance, which he disdainfully refusing, so moved the young mans choler that he charged him with hypocrisie and dissimulation, or frenzie: to whom Spira gravely answering, said:

You may interpret the matter as you will: but I am sure, I am not only the Actor, but the Argument and matter of the Tragedy. I would it were frenzie either fained or true: for if it were frenzie, I could put it off at pleasure; if it were a real frenzie, yet there were some hope left of Gods mercy, whereas now there is none. For I know God hath pronounced me an enemy, and guilty of high treason against his Majesty. I am a cast away, a vessel of wrath, yet dare you call it dissembling and frenzie, and can mock at the formidable example of the heavy wrath of God, that should teach you fear and terror. But it is natural to the flesh either out of malice or ignorance, to speak perversly of the works of God: (The natural man discerneth not the things that are of God, because they are spiritually discerned.)

How can this be (said Gribould) that you can thus excellently discourse of the iudgements of God, and of the graces of his holy spirit; that you find the want of them, and earnestly desire them, and yet you think you are utterly deprived of them?

Take this for certain, saith he, I want the main grace of all, and that which is absolutely necessary, and God doth many times extort most true and strange testimonies of his Majesty, justice and mercy, yea out of the mouths of very reprobates: for even Judas, after he had betrayed his Master, was constrained to confesse his sin, and to justify the innocency of Christ, and therefore, if I do the like, it is no new or strange matter. God hath taken faith from me, and left me other common gifts for my deeper condemnation: By how much more I remember, what I had, and hear others discourse of what they have, by so much the more is my torment, in that I know what I want and how there is no way to be relieved.

Thus spake he, the tears all the while trickling down, professing that his pangs were such as the damned wights in hell endure not the like misery: that his estate was worse then that of Cain or Judas, & therefore he desired to die. Yet behold, saith he, the Scriptures are accomplished in me, (They shal desire to die, and death shal fly from them.) And verily, he seemed exceedingly to fear lest his life should be drawn out to a longer thread; and finding no sale of relief, ever and anon cried out, O miserable O miserable



ferable wretch, then turning to the company, he besought them in this manner:

O Brethren! take a diligent heed to your life, make more account of the gift of Gods Spirit than I have done, learn to be ware of my misery, think not you are assured Christians; because you understand something of the Gospel, take heed you grow not secure on that ground, be constant and immoveable in the maintenance of your Profession: Confess even unto death, if you be called thereto; He that loveth father, mother, brother, sisters, sons, daughters, kindred, houses, lands, more than Christ is not worthy of him.

These words (said they) do not sound like the words of a wicked Reprobate.

I do but here imitate (saith Spira) the rich Glutton in the Gospel who though in hell, yet was careful that his brethren should not come to that place of torment: and I say to you, Brethren, take heed of this miserable estate wherein I am.

Then, turning himself to certain young men that were present, he desired them to conceive him aright. I do not speak this to derogate from the certainty of saving faith, and the promises of the Gospel: for they are most sure; But take heed of relying on that faith that works not a holy and unblameable life, worthy of a believer; credit me, it will fail, I have tried it: I presumed I had gotten the right faith, I preached it to others, I had all places of scripture in memory that might support it; I thought my self sure, and in the meantime living impiously and carelessly. Behold now the Judgements of God have overtaken me, not to correction, but to condemnation: And now you would have me to believe, but it will not be; for I feel (too late) that good things belong only to such as are good whose sins are covered with Christs death and blood, as with a vail, and guarded with His righteous merits, from the flood of Gods wrath, even as with a mighty wall, lest miserable mortals should be swallowed up with the greatness of their sin. But as for me, I have, as it were, willfully with my hands, pulled down this Rampier, behind which I might have rested in safety and now are the swelling waters even to my soul, and I am cast away.

One of his familiar friends chanced to say, That certainly he was overcome with Melancholy: which being overheard, Spira answered:

Well be it so; seeing you will needs have it so: Thus also is Gods wrath manifested against me, in that he hath taken from me the use of mine Understanding and Reason, so as I can neither rightly esteem and judge of my distemper, nor hope of remedy. You see, Brethren, what a dangerous thing it is, to stop or stay



in things that concern Gods glory: especially to dissemble upon any terms. What a fearful thing is it, to be near and almost a Christian? Never was the like example to this of mine; and therefore, if you be wise, you will seriously consider thereof. O that God would let loose his hand from me, that it were with me now as in times past; I would scorn the threats of the most cruel Tyrants, bear torments with invincible resolution, and glory in the outward profession of Christ, till I were choaked in the flame and my body consumed to ashes.

You say you are Desperate, O Spira, said they, why then do you not strike, with some weapon or other, violently to make an end of your life, as desperate men use to do? Let me have a sword, (said Spira:) why what would you do with it, (quoth they?) I cannot tell you (said he) what this mind would move me to, upon occasion, nor what I would do.

They perceiving small effect of all this their labour, but rather that he grew worse; for the avoiding of concurrence of people (for every day seldom fewer then twenty continued with him) and to stop the course of fame, which was continually blown abroad of him, They consult to carry him back again to his own Country: and those his friends that came to comfort him, began to take their leave of him. Vergerius, amongst the rest, required, that, at their parting, they might pray together with him. Spira hardly consented and as unwillingly performed: for he said, My heart is estranged from God, I cannot call him Father from my heart; all good motions are now quite gone, my heart is full of malediction, hatred and blasphemy against God: I find I grow more and more hardened in heart, and cannot sleep nor help myself; Your prayers for me shall turn to your own benefit, they can do me no good.

Vergerius came to take his leave of him, whom Spira embracing, said, Although I know that nothing can bring any benefit to me a reprobate, but that every thing shall tend to my deeper condemnation; yet I give you hearty thanks for your kind office of love and good-will; and the Lord return it into you with a plentiful increase of all good.

The next day being brought down to his intended journey, by the way, looking round about him with a ghastly look, he saw a knife lying on a table; to which he running hastily, snatching hold of, as intending to mischief himself; but his friends laying hold of him, stopped him in his purpose: whereupon, with indignation he said, I would I were above God, for I know he will have no mercy on

Thus



## 28 *A Relation of the fearful, &c.*

Thus went he homewards, often saying, that he ended the condition of Cain and Judas. He lay about six weeks in this case, in a continual burning; neither stirring nor receiving any thing but by force, and that without digestion; so spent, that he appeared a perfect Ananias, expressing to the view nothing but sinews and bones, vehemently raging for drink, ever pining, yet fearful long, dreadful of Hell, yet coveting death, continual torment, yet his own tormentor.

And thus consuming himself with grief & horror, impatience and despair, like a living man in hell, he represented an extraordinary example of the justice and power of God. And thus (as far as appeareth) within a few days after his arrival at his own home, he departed this present life: Yet an occasion to make us remember, That secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but charity to men to teach him to hope all things.

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F I N I S.

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